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SPRUCE SAWFLY, NEW PEST,
ATTACKS NEW ENGLAND FORESTS

Another forest insect, well known in Europe but now for the first time attracting attention in this country, is threatening the forests of New England, according to Dr. F. C. Craighead of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. This is the European spruce sawfly which is known to have been in eastern Canada for about ten years. In the United States the insect has been taken in several localities in Maine and Massachusetts. It is probably quite generally distributed in northern New England.

R. E. Balch of the Dominion Entomological Service has described to Federal entomologists how the Canadian government is dealing with this insect. In 1930 it was observed to be defoliating native species of spruce in the Gaspe Peninsula. Since that time it has spread considerably and at least 5,000 acres in the Gaspe are heavily infested. Light infestations occur in every county throughout New Brunswick.

The damage is done by the larvae which feed upon the old foliage and usually avoid that of the current season. They feed readily on white, black, red and Norway spruces, and perhaps on other species. White spruce is the preferred host. Badly infested trees lose all but the newest needles and those at the tops of the trees, thus exposing the limbs and twigs and giving to the forest a distinct greyish brown cast.

Canadian studies have shown that complete or almost complete defoliation is necessary to kill the average spruce tree, but some of those fatally injured will not die for several years.

Studies of the sawfly in Canada indicate that there is only one generation each year in the Gaspe, but two may occur in New Brunswick, and perhaps also in New England.

The Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine plans a thorough survey of the New England States to determine how widely distributed this insect has become and how great a menace it is to the spruce of the United States.

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